

A SHORT
HISTORY OF THE MORMONITES;
OR,
LATTER DAY SAINTS.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF
THE REAL ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

BY
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"FALSE PROPHETS SHALL ARISE, AND SHALL DECEIVE MANY."
S. MATT. XXIV. 11.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages lay no claim to originality, the writer's aim being merely to bring within a small compass such general information as he thinks may be useful and acceptable to those who have no opportunity of consulting larger treatises. He is indebted mainly to the Rev. Henry Caswall, whose "Prophet of the Nineteenth Century," and whose "City of the Mormons, or three days at Nauvoo," have been before the English public since the year 1843, and whose interesting and instructive volumes he begs to recommend to those who may wish for fuller information. He has also referred to the seventh article in the "English Review" for the month of June in the present year, and to some of the works and tracts distributed by the Mormon emissaries in England.

Si videremus ut credamus quod est in illis
magis illas et diffidimus ex diversis rationibus
huc iuram si non aliud ei se non possit adiungere. Non
admititur de cunctis quod non solum ex causis et rationibus
qui sit de fidei et conscientie causa sed etiam
ex conscientia et conscientia ex fidei causa. Non
tamen credi ut credamus ut credamus secundum hanc
estimare omnium diligenter et diligenter et secundum
estimulorum credimus ut credamus secundum hanc et ut
ratiocinii credimus ut credamus secundum hanc et ut
conscientia et conscientia ex fidei causa credimus ut
credamus secundum hanc et ut credamus secundum hanc et ut
conscientia et conscientia ex fidei causa credimus ut

A Short History of the Mormonites.

THE Mormonites, or as they now profanely prefer to style themselves "The Church of JESUS CHRIST of Latter-day Saints," originated in the present century; they were founded by Joseph Smith, an American, of low birth, and no education. Their tenets are so wild and extravagant that nothing but the fact of so many thousands having given credit to them would make them worthy of a serious consideration.

In America there is no established Church, and no parochial organization; and men make a boast of their complete "civil and religious liberty," which means a freedom from all restraints in matters affecting the conscience. In America, therefore, the development of enormous growths, such as that of Mormonism, might have been anticipated; and if this evil had remained confined to that country, we might have contemplated its progress, or marked its decline, with no other feelings than those with which we study the rise and progress of Mahomedanism; or of any of the exploded forms of ancient misbelief.

But the mischief has reached our own shores, and has found in England a congenial soil: It has established itself in our larger towns; it has penetrated into the heart of our rural population. A moral pestilence, it sweeps away its victims year by year, and threatens to become acclimated amongst us.

Multitudes have already gone to join the standard of Joseph Smith in America: as far back as the year 1842, five thousand had already emigrated, and those not of the

labouring class, but principally from the rank above them. Since that date perversion and emigration have been constantly going forward, and a writer in the English Review, for June in the present year, assures us, that there is good reason to believe that the number of Mormonites, now in England, is not much under 30,000—that is, thirty thousand now here; not counting the far greater number who have left their country, and it is to be feared their country's faith; giving up themselves, and their worldly substance, to the mercies of rapacious adventurers; and, what is worse, consigning their wives, and their innocent children, to the delusions of a fanatical impiety.

It is plain then that the mischief cannot be neglected, especially in places where it has begun to show itself; it is due to our fellow countrymen to put them on their guard; and this may best be done by a short detail of the facts connected with the rise of this imposture, and by an exhibition of the thing itself, as far as it has hitherto been manifested.

Joseph Smith was born in the year 1805, in Windsor county, in the State of Vermont; his father was a small farmer, of no particular religious opinions, and addicted to intemperance, and other vicious habits; he was married to a woman who does not seem to have been superior to her husband, by whom he had seven sons and three daughters. "From a variety of documents, certified before proper tribunals, it is evident that the father and sons were notoriously addicted to falsehood, drunkenness, and idleness; that they frequently boasted their skill in deception, and were also suspected of gaining their livelihood partly by theft. They spent much of their time in digging for money, which they pretended had been hidden in the earth during the revolutionary war; and to this day many of their excavations are still to be seen in the neighbourhood of Manchester. For breach of contracts, nonpayment of debts and borrowed money, and for duplicity, the whole family was notorious; their object being, apparently, to live without work upon the industry of others.

"In this school of villainy Joseph was trained from a child; and finally became the most distinguished of his vagrant family for cunning, and unscrupulous audacity."

When Joseph was about fifteen years of age, one of the American "Revivals," as they are called, took place in

their neighbourhood. These revivals consist in continuous and exciting preaching, carried on in large camp meetings, day and night; and followed by exhibitions of fanaticism, like in kind, (but much more intense in degree) to those which are known to take place in Methodist Meeting-houses in our own country. The people melt into tears; fall into convulsions; and exhibit frantic gestures, mingled with groans, and extravagant exclamations; which their preachers encourage them to believe are the work of a Divine power.

The "Revival" we are now speaking of began with the Methodists, but soon affected the whole district. The usual strife for proselytes commenced among the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian Sects. Joseph Smith's mother, three of his brothers, and a sister, joined the Presbyterians, Joseph himself expressed some partiality for the Methodists, but never attached himself to their society; declaring himself unable to decide among so many conflicting opinions, which was right, and which was wrong. Notwithstanding, however, the new professions of the family it does not appear that its character was materially improved.

We now come to an incident of some importance in the history of this delusion.

In the year 1822, while Joseph Smith was employed in digging a well, in company with his brother Hyrum, and a person named Chase, the last mentioned individual found a curious stone, about twenty feet from the surface, and brought it to the top of the well. Joseph immediately placed it in his hat; alleging, that, by putting his hat over his face, he could see great wonders in the stone. Chase accordingly valued it highly; but Joseph Smith succeeded in obtaining it from him; and his father hereupon claimed for him a kind of second sight; namely a power of looking into the depth of the earth, and discovering hidden treasures. When the worthless family engaged in their nocturnal excursions for money digging, Joseph was their guide; putting the wonderful stone into his hat, and then closing the hat over his face he pretended to decide by the appearance of the stone, where they should begin to excavate.*

* Caswall's "Prophet of the Nineteenth Century," pp. 27, 28—30.

In the autumn of 1826 a circumstance occurred which seems to have suggested to him the course which he afterwards pursued—and which has been deposed on the oath of one Peter Ingersol, to have been related to him by Smith himself as follows.

While walking in the woods he happened to find some beautifully white sand, which had been washed up by a stream of water, and deposited in a hollow; he took off his frock, tied up some quarts of it, and returned home. On entering the house he found the family at dinner; and when they expressed their desire to know what was in his frock, he gravely told them that it was the "Golden Bible." He had heard somewhere of such a treasure, and the thought suddenly came into his mind; but he was very much surprised to find that they believed him, and were eager to see the wonderful book. Joseph solemnly told them that no man would see it with the naked eye and live; but that if they were willing to take the consequences he was quite ready to show it to them. They now positively refused to see it, and fled from the apartment in great consternation.—"Now," thought Joseph to himself, "I have got the fools fixed, and I'll carry out the fun."

There was residing in Palmyra at that time, one Martin Harris, a farmer of some property.—He had been first a Quaker, then a Methodist, afterwards an Universalist, then a Baptist, and next a Presbyterian—and now he was nothing at all. He had always been a firm believer in dreams, visions and apparitions; and for some time had expressed his conviction that Smith, by means of the miraculous stone, could see into the earth, and discover any secret he desired.

From this man, Smith obtained a sum of fifty dollars; and further persuaded him to raise more money by the mortgage of his farm, in order to defray the expense of printing his pretended golden Bible, which he represented to be composed of plates of the thickness of tin, clasped together by rings of gold, and of very great value.

These plates, he said, had been discovered to him by an angel, and he offered to deposit them with Harris as a security for his money, enlarging much on the profits that would accrue from the publication of the work, which contained, as Smith pretended, a revelation given to some of the Israelites who had emigrated in Zedekiah's reign from

Jerusalem to America ; and, after a succession of reverses, had perished ; leaving their sacred writings engraved on these golden plates, which had been deposited by Moroni the son of Mormon, the last of their prophets, in the earth ; to be found in the last days after an interval of 1427 years by Joseph Smith.

The characters graven upon the golden plates were, as Joseph Smith pretended, unknown at the present day ; he termed them Egyptian hieroglyphics. The language also in which the records were written was extinct ; but by the aid of the wonderful stone, and, as he blasphemously added, "by the gift and power of God," he was enabled to decipher and translate it.

In order to convince Harris that there really was such a treasure as he pretended, he had the audacity to give him a paper upon which he had drawn certain strange characters, purporting to be a copy from some of the golden plates ; and this he told him he might submit to some learned person for examination, who would soon satisfy him as to the security of the investment.

With this precious document Harris set out from his home near Palmyra, a distance of three or four hundred miles, to New York ; he obtained access to Professor Anthon, of Columbia College, a gentleman well known in England for his valuable editions of several of the classics. Parley Pratt, Joseph Smith's chief emissary in England, relating this story, informs us that Professor Anthon treated the manuscript with great respect, and professed an opinion, that although he was unable to decipher it, something might be made out from the plates themselves, if he could have an opportunity of inspecting them : this, however, is a misrepresentation of the matter ; what Professor Anthon told Martin Harris was, that some cunning fellow was endeavouring to impose upon him, and that the strange characters scrawled upon the paper which he presented to him, were nothing but letters of the Greek and Hebrew alphabet, intermixed with figures of stars, and concluding with a rude imitation of the Mexican Zodiac ; at his request he gave him a written certificate to this effect, which so far satisfied Harris, that he determined to have nothing more to do with Joseph Smith, and his golden Bible.

However, on his return home, with an unaccountable, but not very uncommon infatuation, he departed from this

10 *Martin Harris assists in the pretended Translation.*

wise resolution ; and abandoned himself entirely to the delusion. The fact that Smith was an obscure and illiterate person, seemed to him a proof of his inspiration ; and he declared his determination that the golden Bible should be published, even though the cost of it should consume the whole of his worldly substance. Soon after his return from New York, he followed Joseph Smith, who had gone before to Pennsylvania.

It was now the summer of 1828, and Smith proceeded openly to announce his new revelation.

Seated in a private room, and screened from sight by a blanket, he dictated a romantic fiction, which poor Martin Harris wrote down from his mouth, on the other side of the curtain ; not daring to peep at the impostor, for fear of arousing the most terrible divine displeasure, which he was told would overtake his temerity, if he should venture to draw near while the work was going forward.

In this manner 116 pages had been completed, which Harris took home and locked up safely, as he thought, in a drawer.

His wife, however, who seems to have had as little faith in her husband's wisdom, as she had in Smith's honesty, removed the upper drawer, which had been left unlocked, and so abstracted the document and concealed it ; with the intention, as she states, of producing it at some future time, if Smith should be so unwise as to attempt to have it rewritten, for she felt certain that no second copy existed, and that the contrivers of the fraud would not be able to reproduce an exact copy of the original. But she had to do with a man who was not so easily to be outwitted. Smith pretended a Revelation from Heaven, rebuking him for negligence, and commanding a suspension of the work.

Ten months elapsed, during which time every effort was made for the recovery of the missing pages ; but all in vain ; and notwithstanding a cruel beating which Harris inflicted upon his wife, whom he justly considered as the author of his misfortune. At last forth came another "Revelation," to the effect that "the lost account, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again," not having been found, was *not* to be retranslated, because Satan had put it into the hearts of those who had committed the theft to alter the manuscript, and by this

Three persons testify to having seen the Golden Plates. 11

means to endeavour to discredit the whole work, "a thing which the **LORD** would not permit Satan to accomplish."

The missing parts were therefore to be supplied by a translation from other plates, termed the plates of Nephi, and to be published as the Record of Nephi.

Mrs. Harris' scheme, though it partially failed, was so far successful, that it blasted the credit of the whole affair, if ever it had any. At least it seems to have shaken her husband's credulity, notwithstanding the ascendancy which Joseph Smith had established over his weak and disordered intellect, for even *his* faith now began to waver, and we find him asking for "greater witness," and demanding a sight of the plates.

Smith put him off upon various pretences; but at last perceiving that he must in some way be pacified, he told him that it had been "revealed," that the plates should be shown to three chosen individuals, *and to three alone*, who should assist in bringing out the work. He also informed him that they were not to be seen with the naked eye, but in a mystical manner; and, strange as it may appear, he succeeded in persuading him, and not him only, but two other persons also, that they had thus seen the plates; one of these persons was named David Whitmer; the other, Oliver Cowdery, a school teacher, and Baptist preacher; these three, Harris, Whitmer, and Cowdery, actually signed a certificate, which is now prefixed to the book of Mormon, in which they declared that an angel had descended from heaven, and laid before their eyes "the plates with the engravings thereon." They also certified that the angel declared that "the plates had been translated by divine power." But the weight due to this testimony may be estimated by the fact, that so simple a matter as ~~sawing~~ golden plates, if they really are to be seen, does not require the intervention of an angel; and moreover Harris, when closely questioned by a sensible gentleman dwelling in Palmyra, declared that he did not see them exactly in the same manner as he saw any other visible object; but "with the eye of Faith, and by the power of God, not of man;" which, if it means anything, means that he never saw them at all; especially when he added afterwards, that they were "all the time covered over with a cloth."

To this testimony of Cowdery, Whitmer, and Harris, that of eight other witnesses was afterwards added, although

12 *Blasphemous pretensions of the Book of Mormon.*

it had been "*revealed*" once, that the privilege was to be confined to *three* chosen individuals. These eight additional witnesses were Joseph Smith the elder, and two of his sons, Hyrum and Samuel, with four brothers of the same Whitmer who had signed the original certificate, and Hiram Page.

They declared that Joseph Smith had shown them the plates ; that they had handled them, and had also seen the curious engravings upon them : all the eleven witnesses, however, were men, it is to be observed, deeply engaged in the imposture ; and expecting to make a fortune by it. Six out of the eleven have since revolted from Mormonism, and have become its opponents. Three died in its profession ; the two others are Hyrum and Samuel Smith, own brothers of the impostor.

The whole matter appears so highly incredible, and the first authors of it so little worthy of confidence, that it is truly astonishing that so many persons should have allowed themselves to be deceived by it ; especially when the impious pretensions of the book itself, upon which the whole matter depends, are considered.

This book purports to be a *new revelation* given to Joseph Smith *by means of an angel* ; it professes to found itself on Scripture, and yet makes important additions to Scripture ; as for instance, that it is *an inspired volume of equal authority with the Old and New Testament* ; that Joseph Smith is a true prophet, bearing a direct commission from JEHOVAH ; and that there is no salvation for any man but by embracing his doctrines ; thus putting him on a footing with our Blessed LORD Himself, as far as the office of a divine teacher is concerned.

This book may therefore be termed, in S. Paul's language, "*another gospel, which is not another*," professing to acknowledge the gospel of CHRIST, it teaches that which makes the gospel void ; to this imposture, then, the words of the same Apostle seem peculiarly applicable, "*Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed.*" (Gal. i. 8.)

But if this book thus carries its own confutation with it, an account of its real origin will convince any unprejudiced person that it is the most impudent forgery that ever was attempted to be palmed upon the credulity of mankind.

One thing, we may remember, which confirmed poor Martin Harris in his delusion, was the fact that Joseph Smith was an illiterate person, who was so far from being able to compose a work like the book of Mormon, that he could not even write his pretended translation with his own hand.

Mahomet, too, was illiterate, or pretended to be so; and he made use of the same argument in proof of *his* imposture; when asked for a miracle, he replied, that *the Koran was itself a miracle.*

The argument, if good for anything, is just as good for Mahomet as for Joseph Smith; in neither case, however, is it very convincing; there is reason to suppose that Mahomet was not so ignorant as he would have the world believe. As for Joseph Smith, no one ever gave him credit for much learning; but there are other ways, short of inspiration, by which the production of the Book of Mormon may be accounted for. The reader will recollect that the pretended translation was conducted behind a curtain; and perhaps instead of looking at golden plates, through magic spectacles, the impostor was merely looking at a written paper with his natural eyes.

That he was in reality thus employed, is made more than probable by the testimony of Mrs. Davison, formerly the wife of one Solomon Spaulding, which was published in a Boston paper of May the 1st, 1839, with the following certificate attached:

"Rev. Solomon Spaulding was the first husband of the narrator of the above history. Since his decease, she has been married to a second husband by the name of Davison. She is now residing in this place; is a woman of irreproachable character, and an humble Christian, and her testimony is worthy of implicit confidence."

"A. Ely, D.D. Pastor Cong. Church in Monson.

"D. R. Austin, Principal of Monson Academy.

"Monson, Mass. April 1, 1839."

Mrs. Davison's testimony is as follows:

"As the *Book of Mormon*, or *Golden Bible*, (as it was originally called) has excited much attention; and is deemed, by a certain new sect, of equal authority with the sacred Scriptures, I think it a duty which I owe to the public, to state what I know touching its origin.

"That its claims to a divine origin are wholly unfounded, needs no proof to a mind unperverted by the grossest delusions. That any sane person should rank it higher than any other merely human composition, is a matter of the greatest astonishment; yet, it is received

as divine by some who dwell in enlightened New England, and even by those who have sustained the character of devoted Christians. Learning recently that Mormonism had found its way into a church in Massachusetts, and has impregnated some with its gross delusions, so that excommunication has been necessary, I am determined to delay no longer in doing what I can to strip the mask from this mother of sin, and to lay open this pit of abominations.

" Solomon Spaulding, to whom I was united in marriage in early life, was a graduate of Dartmouth College, and was distinguished for a lively imagination and a great fondness for history. At the time of our marriage, he resided in Cherry Valley, New York. From this place, we removed to New Salem, Ashtabula county, Ohio, sometimes called Conneaut, as it is situated on Conneaut Creek. Shortly after our removal to this place, his health sunk, and he was laid aside from active labours. In the town of New Salem, there are numerous mounds and forts, supposed by many to be the dilapidated dwellings and fortifications of a race now extinct. These ancient relics arrest the attention of the new settlers, and become objects of research for the curious. Numerous implements were found, and other articles evincing great skill in the arts. Mr. Spaulding being an educated man, and passionately fond of history, took a lively interest in these developments of antiquity; and in order to beguile the hours of retirement, and furnish employment for his lively imagination, he conceived the idea of giving an historical sketch of this long lost race. Their extreme antiquity led him to write in the most ancient style, and as the Old Testament is the most ancient book in the world, he imitated its style as nearly as possible. His sole object in writing this imaginary history was to amuse himself and his neighbours. This was about the year 1812. Hull's surrender at Detroit, occurred near the same time, and I recollect the date well from that circumstance. As he progressed in his narrative, the neighbours would come in from time to time to hear portions read; and a great interest in the work was excited among them. It claimed to have been written by one of the lost nation and to have been *recovered from the earth*, and assumed the title of 'Manuscript found.' The neighbours would often inquire how Mr. Spaulding progressed in deciphering the manuscript; and when he had a sufficient portion prepared, he would inform them, and they would assemble to hear it read. He was enabled from his acquaintance with the classics and ancient history to introduce many singular names, which were particularly noticed by the people, and could be easily recognized by them. Mr. Solomon Spaulding had a brother, Mr. John Spaulding, residing in the place at the time, who was perfectly familiar with the work, and repeatedly heard the whole of it read. From New Salem, we removed to Pittsburgh, Pa. Here Mr. Spaulding found a friend and acquaintance, in the person of Mr. Patterson, an editor of a newspaper. He exhibited his manuscript to Mr. Patterson, who was very much pleased with it, and borrowed it for perusal. He retained it for a long time, and informed Mr. Spaulding that if he would make out a title page and preface he would publish it, and it might be a source of profit. This Mr. Spaulding refused to do. Sidney Rigdon, who has figured so largely in the history of the Mormons, was at that time connected with the printing office of Mr. Patterson, as is well-known.

in that region, and as Rigdon himself has frequently stated, became acquainted with Mr. Spaulding's manuscript, and copied it. It was a matter of notoriety and interest to all connected with the printing establishment. At length, the manuscript was returned to its author, and soon after we removed to Amity, Washington county, &c., where Mr. Spaulding deceased in 1816. The manuscript then fell into my hands, and was carefully preserved. It has frequently been examined by my daughter, Mrs. M'Kenstry, of Monson, Mass., with whom I now reside, and by other friends.

" After the book of Mormon came out, a copy of it was taken to New Salem, the place of Mr. Spaulding's former residence, and the very place where the manuscript found was written. A woman preacher appointed a meeting there; and in the meeting read, and repeated copious extracts from the book of Mormon. The historical part was immediately recognized by all the older inhabitants, as the identical work of Mr. Spaulding, in which they had all been so deeply interested years before. Mr. John Spaulding was present, and recognized perfectly the work of his brother. He was amazed and afflicted, that it should have been perverted to so wicked a purpose. His grief found vent in a flood of tears, and he arose on the spot, and expressed to the meeting his sorrow and regret that the writings of his deceased brother should be used for a purpose so vile and shocking. The excitement in New Salem became so great, that the inhabitants had a meeting, and deputed Dr. Philastus Hurlbut, one of their number, to repair to this place, and to obtain from me the original manuscript of Mr. Spaulding, for the purpose of comparing it with the Mormon Bible, to satisfy their own minds, and to prevent their friends from embracing an error so delusive. This was in the year 1834. Dr. Hurlbut brought with him an introduction, and request for the manuscript, which was signed by Messrs. Henry Lake, Aaron Wright, and others, with all of whom I was acquainted, as they were my neighbours when I resided at New Salem. I am sure that nothing would grieve my husband more, were he living, than the use which has been made of his work. The air of antiquity which was thrown about the compositions doubtless suggested the idea of converting it to purposes of delusion. Thus an historical romance, with the addition of a few pious expressions and extracts from the sacred Scriptures, has been construed into a new Bible, and palmed off upon a company of poor deluded fanatics as Divine. I have given the previous brief narration, that this work of deep deception and wickedness may be searched to the foundation, and the authors exposed to the contempt and execration they so justly deserve.

" MATILDA DAVISON."

The above statement of Mrs. Davison has been the subject of careful investigation by persons interested in unmasking the Mormonite imposture, and has not only been found correct, but has been confirmed by many circumstantial details, which are briefly recorded in Mr. Caswall's Prophet of the Nineteenth Century, chap. ii. It has indeed been

16 *Sidney Rigdon an accomplice of Joseph Smith.*

denied by Sidney Rigdon, in a letter bearing date, May 29, 1839, but he was then deeply interested in the success of the imposture, being a partner in the fraud ; and, moreover, he has since confessed his error, by seceding from Joseph Smith, "the feelings of a father overcoming every other consideration on his making the discovery that the impostor had attempted to add his daughter to the number of his *spiritual wives*."

"Mrs. Davison's account, then, suffices to authenticate the quarter from which Joseph Smith derived the materials of a work which he was by no means qualified by his education to compose : nor can there be any doubt that it was by means of Sidney Rigdon, that Spaulding's manuscript found its way out of the printing-office at Pittsburgh, into the hands of Joseph Smith."

This man, Sidney Rigdon, was originally a preacher among the Campbellite Baptists of Kirtland, and there can be little doubt, that having got possession of Solomon Spaulding's papers, he formed a design of palming them off upon the world as a divine revelation, and "employed for this purpose Joseph Smith, a loose vagabond, whom his habits and reputation as a money-digger, gifted with supposed supernatural endowments, pointed out as a proper instrument for so audacious an attempt. The pretended translation from behind the curtain, of which Martin Harris was made the dupe, being nothing more than the dictation of Spaulding's romance, with such alterations and embellishments as would suit the particular purpose which the two confederates had in view."^{*}

As to Solomon Spaulding, it is to be regretted that his talents were not better employed. To dress up a fiction in the language of Holy Writ, *imitating as nearly as possible the style of the Old Testament*, for the amusement of himself and his friends, merely because "the Old Testament is the most ancient book in the world," without the slightest regard for its sacred character, strikes us as very shocking and profane. And that a society of persons calling themselves Christians, should have endured to hear such a composition "repeatedly read," and should have listened to it with approbation, speaks but ill for the tone of religious feeling prevalent among them.

* "English Review," pp. 420, 421. Clarke's "Mormonism Unmasked," pp. 17—19.

What too is to be thought of Mr. Patterson, the book-seller at Pittsburg, who was so *very much pleased* with this work, and *wished to publish it*, without seeming to be aware of the effect of such a desecration on the public mind? What too of the public in general, among whom such a profanation was thought likely to be "a source of profit?" Is it not plain that the same persons who could endure, and even applaud, the irreverence of Solomon Spaulding, were at least in some measure prepared for the blasphemies of Joseph Smith?

Mr. John Spaulding, indeed, when he heard his brother's manuscript put forward as a new revelation, is represented as having been "amazed and afflicted;" but it does not seem to have struck him that there was a radical profanity in the work itself, suggestive, as Mrs. Davison herself acknowledges, of the evil purposes to which it was afterwards applied; at least that it was a work well fitted for such purposes, and therefore must be esteemed, in no slight degree, answerable for the evils they have entailed on mankind.

The principal object of these pages is to exhibit, in as clear a light as is consistent with brevity, the fact that the Book of Mormon is a gross fraud and imposture, and so to undermine the credit of the whole superstructure of Mormonism, which is based upon that book. The author might have further demonstrated his point by internal proofs drawn from an examination of the book itself; but enough has been done for the purpose he had in view.

Perhaps, however, the present treatise, considered in the light of a warning against Mormonism, might be thought incomplete, if the doctrines of this delusion, and the practices of its votaries are passed over in entire silence; a few words must therefore be devoted to these matters.

First, then, to acquaint the reader with some of the more prominent doctrines of Mormonism, which, for his greater satisfaction, shall be stated, as nearly as possible, in the very words of the Mormonists themselves.

If he should embrace this delusion, he will have to believe that Joseph Smith, notwithstanding his low and villainous character, is a true prophet: and that all he says is to be received upon peril of damnation.

That the Book of Mormon is of equal authority with the

Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and that "there is as positive testimony [for it] as has ever been found in the other *Scriptures* concerning any truth which GOD has ever revealed."

That the *sole* intention of prophecy is to make men acquainted with futurity, which supposes that all prophecy may and ought to be understood before its fulfilment. Whereas, we know that some prophecies are sealed until the time of the end, in order that it may *then* appear that GOD has spoken.*

He will have to believe that *all* prophecy is to have a *literal* fulfilment; which was the error of the Jew causing him to reject his SAVIOUR. And who can say whether the same error may not blind the men of these latter days in respect of CHRIST's second advent?

He will have to believe that there *has been no Church of CHRIST upon earth* from the time of the cessation of miracles, until it was revived in Joseph Smith; and that none, for many centuries, can have been saved, except those for whom some living person shall now be baptized by the Mormons, which they call "baptizing for the dead;"† and all this in spite of S. Paul's prophecy, that "Miracles should cease;" and in the face of our LORD's promise, to be with His Church, *always, to the end of the world*, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it.

He will have to believe that the "stone cut out without hands," mentioned by the prophet Daniel, is *not* the Church of CHRIST founded by the Apostles; but what Joseph Smith blasphemously calls "the Church of CHRIST," founded by himself.

That no man is a minister of CHRIST unless he has received a *direct* commission from above: and consequently that those, who, like Timothy and Titus, were appointed by the Apostles, were not true ministers, unless they also bore an immediate commission from God Himself.

That eternal life is to be spent with CHRIST *on earth*, and not with CHRIST in heaven, although the LORD has willed that His saints should be with Him where He is: and although S. Paul has declared that they shall be

* A Voice of Warning, by Parley P. Pratt, sixth edition: Edinburgh, p. 79; pp. 1—10.

† Book of Mormon. Kingdom of God, Part II. by Orson Pratt, p. 8. Nauvoo Temple Mysteries, p. 28.

caught up to meet the **LORD** in the air, and so shall be forever with the **LORD**.

He will have to believe that true conversion is the immediate act of **GOD**, and that man has nothing to do with it, though faith cometh by preaching, that is by man's ministry.

He will have to believe that where miraculous powers are not professed, there is no true Church; and that they have been revived among the Mormonites at the present day; and therefore among other strange and fatal consequences, that men ought not to seek to physicians, but to the Mormon Elders, who will cure them by the laying on of their hands.

He will have to believe that the Mormonites can work miracles, although they do not exhibit them, except to those who already believe. For they say that "a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," which shall not be given, because "gifts are for the edifying of the Church," and not for unbelievers; whereas S. Paul expressly declares that "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to *them that believe not.*" (1 Cor. xiv. 22.)

He will have to believe that **GOD** is a material substance, like a man—that He has a body, parts, and passions; eats and drinks: and that all who conceive otherwise of **GOD**, do not worship the true **GOD**.

Mr. Caswall, at the end of his "City of the Mormons," has printed the "Mormon Creed," which among other things, states,

That there is no divine punishment for original sin.

That "we are saved through the atonement of JESUS CHRIST, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." In other words, that "we are saved by works, not by faith."

That "the Bible is the Word of **GOD**, as far as it is translated correctly; and that the book of *Mormon* also is the Word of **GOD**."

Lastly, that the Scriptures do not contain **GOD**'s final revelation to mankind; but that "He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of **GOD**." Upon which it will be sufficient to observe that the Jewish Dispensation was confessedly designed to introduce the Gospel; but that there is nothing leading us to suppose that the Gospel was in like manner designed to

usher in a new revelation; on the contrary, we are told that it is "a kingdom which cannot be moved."

The above are some of the Mormonist doctrines, by which the reader will perceive how far they are from maintaining "the faith once delivered to the Saints."

As to their conduct and practices, Mr. Ruxton, in his "Life in the far West," informs us that the Missourians, among whom they first established themselves, considered them as "bad neighbours, on account of their pilfering propensities, and their utter disregard of the conventional decencies of society; exhibiting the greatest immorality, and endeavouring to establish amongst their society an indiscriminate concubinage." * * * But that they "tolerated their presence among them, until they openly proclaimed their intention of seizing upon the country, and of expelling by force the present occupants; giving, as their reason, that it had been revealed to their prophets that THE LAND OF ZION was to be possessed by themselves alone." *

The end of this was that the Missourians expelled them; and that they fled to "Clay country, where they established themselves, and would finally have formed a thriving settlement, but for their own acts of wilful dishonesty. At this time their blasphemous mummery knew no bounds. Joe Smith, and other 'prophets,' who had lately arisen, were declared to be the chosen of Gon.; and it was the general creed, that on the day of Judgment the former would take his stand on the right hand of the judgment seat, and that none would pass into the kingdom of heaven, without his seal and touch. One of their tenets was the faith in *spiritual matrimony*. No woman, it appeared, would be admitted into heaven, unless *passed* by a Saint. To qualify them for this, it was necessary that the woman should first be received by the guaranteeing Mormon, as *an earthly wife.*" * * * "The consequence of this state of things," says Mr. Ruxton, "may be imagined. The most debasing immorality was the precept of the order, and an almost universal concubinage existed among the sect; which at this time numbered at least forty thousand. Their disregard to the laws of decency and morality was such, as could not be tolerated in any class of civilized society." †

They were again expelled, and emigrated to the State of

Illinois, where they founded their City of Nauvoo, and built an enormous temple, which they called the Temple of Zion—"half church, half hotel, where Joe Smith and the other prophets resided ;" and where they established a mockery of religion, consisting in burlesque* imitations of holy things, in preaching, praying, prophesying, and *dancing*.

Here they organized a regular militia, and openly defied the government ; but their city was taken ; the ringleaders confined, and Joseph Smith shot by the mob through the prison bars.

After his death the prestige of the fanaticism declined ; still thousands joined them annually ; and at last the state took measures to remove them bodily from the country.

In the year 1846, they migrated from the settlements of the United States ; and, after extreme sufferings, during which many of their numbers perished miserably by hunger, exposure, and fatigue, they settled themselves, at last, in the Far West, at the Salt Lake, in a barren district ; which, however, by toil and industry, they have converted, as late accounts inform us, into a flourishing settlement.

Whether they have left off their immorality, and "pilfering propensities ;" and, taught by bitter experience, have learned to live righteously as well as industriously, does not appear ; but if there be truth in the saying, "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit," it is impossible for charity herself to expect any good of a society which springs from such an origin as theirs, especially when the mischief of their fanatical superstition remains, like a canker, eating at the core.

Those who remain at home, as well as those who emigrate to the new settlement beyond the Rocky Mountains, must still embrace all the monstrosities of this wild delusion, and must consent that the innocent and unsuspecting minds of their little children shall know nothing of the pure faith in which they themselves have been educated, and which they have so wantonly trodden under foot ; but from their earliest years, shall be accustomed, in its stead, to believe in Joseph Smith, and his wonderful spectacles, and his new Bible.

Upon the whole this history is highly instructive as illus-

* "An account of the Nauvoo Temple Mysteries and other abominations practised by the Mormons previous to their emigration for California, by Increase M'Gee Van Dusen."—Arthur Hall and Co.

trating our Blessed REDEEMER's caution, "to take heed what we hear." He that listeneth to wise men will become wise : but the companion of fools shall be destroyed. The answer to Joseph Smith's emissaries should be, What have you to teach me which I cannot learn, as well, or better, from the Ministers of the Church in which I have been baptized? If you bring me anything beside or beyond that, you bring me what is worse than unnecessary, because the Church is the keeper and expounder of Holy Scripture, and that teaches me all things needful for my soul's health. You have *no authority* to set up for my instructor, even if it be true that an angel from heaven has given you a message from GOD to me. While for the truth of this strange assertion you bring me *no proof*; and require me to believe it solely upon your own word, though you are a perfect stranger to me ; and for ought I know, are either deceiving, or yourself deceived.

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The fact is that the converts to these fanatics are not generally won over from the members of the Church, but from among the ranks of those who have dissented and departed from her, or else from among those who have never enjoyed the benefit of her teaching.

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human learning is if anything, a bar to Divine influence ? He is himself an eminent example of inspiration superseding knowledge. Do they believe that men if converted at all, must be converted by sudden and immediate acts of Divine interposition ? He is, in his own person, a monument of the mercy of God to the worst of sinners. And what have they to set against all these claims upon their attention and their faith, if they have no Creeds and no formularies ; no definite and ascertained standard by which to measure the truth or falsehood of any doctrine that may be palmed upon them ?

But whatever the *reason* may be, the *fact* is that this monstrous infatuation has not taken any deep hold except where there is no established religion, or in those places where, owing to some sudden increase of population, or to other causes, the people are not under the influence of the Church.

This fact ought to be duly pondered, and seeing that impostures of all kinds can only take root, like evil weeds, in neglected soils ; it will perhaps serve to convince considerate persons that the act of departing from the Church is a downward step which may entail serious consequences ; there being in that Divine society *something* which serves as a preservative against delusions ; and *that*, in proportion to the sincerity with which her doctrines are embraced, and the clearness with which they are comprehended.

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In some such way as this the Mormon emissaries should be answered—but the *best* manner of dealing with them undoubtedly is *not to go and hear them at all*, upon the principle before mentioned, viz: that if they speak the truth, they teach no more than what is best learnt at Church—and if they do *not* teach the truth they ought not to be listened to.

The fact is that the converts to these fanatics are not generally won over from the members of the Church, but from among the ranks of those who have dissented and departed from her, or else from among those who have never enjoyed the benefit of her teaching.

The reason is plain, for the sects in general, however much they differ from one another, all seem to agree in the following points :

They encourage the indulgence of curiosity, by teaching men to run after different preachers and new lights.—They encourage the notion that learning is not necessary for a teacher of Christianity, there being something better, namely, “inspiration :” and inspiration they do not consider as coming *in aid* of natural faculties, but as *superseding* them. Hence it is not uncommonly thought that the less learned a teacher is, the better ; because there is so much the more reason to conclude that he *must be* “inspired.”

Again they encourage men to look out for *miraculous interpositions*, and especially in the work of conversion—they hardly believe grace is grace, however it may be manifested by good works and good desires, unless there is something of what they call “evidence” attending it—that is some sensible experience which they interpret into a proof of a direct interposition of the ALMIGHTY : so that unless men are converted *by miracle*, they will not believe that they are converted at all.

Lastly, a want of settled forms and creeds, among the sects, renders them liable to variableness in their religious conviction ; and either wholly dependent on the religious opinions of their teachers, for the time being, in respect of their rule of faith, and the matter of their prayers : or else left, every man to follow the wanderings of his own untutored imagination. Thus they become exposed to the arts of men, who, like Joseph Smith, lie in wait to deceive ; and have the cunning and audacity to set up a claim of inspiration.

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